

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 05478 071044Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

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INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5478

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,SS, SP

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA: LATEST SPANISH PERCEPTIONS

REF : RABAT 3766

1. THE DCM AND POL COUNSELOR CALLED AUGUST 6 ON DIRGEN NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS FERRER. THE QUERIED FERRER ABOUT SPANISH SAHARA, MOROCCAN PRISONERS, AND RELATED MATTERS. FERRER, AFTER SOME HESITATION, SIAD QUOTE YOU SHOULD KNOW UNQUOTE THAT MOROCCANS HAVE NOW SOUGHT TO USE LIBYA, AS AN INTERMEDIARY. AFTER RECENT VISIT OF MOROCCAN/MAURITANIAN DELEGATION TO LIBYA, LIBYANS PASSED ON TO SPAIN MOROCCAN SUGGESTIONS THAT SPAIN AND MOROCCO NO LONGER WAIT FOR OUTCOME OF ICJ ADVISORY OPINION OR COMMITTEE OF 24 EXERCISE, BUT PROCEED NOW TO REACH AGREEMENT ON DISPOSAL OF SPANISH SAHARA.

2. FERRER SAID THAT ONE COULD NEVER TELL ABOUT MOROCCAN MOTIVES AND HE COULD SPECULATE I SEVERAL DIRECTIONS:

(A) THE MOROCCANS WERE AFRAID THAT THE RESULTS OF THE ICJ AND COMMITTEE OF 24 EXERCISES WOULD NOT BE TO THEIR LIKING; (B) THE MOROCCANS SAW AN OPPORTUNITY TO SETTLE THE ISSUE ONCE AND FOR ALL; OR (C) THE MOROCCANS MIGHT

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PAGE 02 MADRID 05478 071044Z

BE SEEKING TO TRICK SPAIN INTO A POSITION WHERE IT

APPEARED TO BE DISOWNING ICJ AND COMMITTEE OF 24 EXERCISES. IN ANY EVENT THE SOONER THE ICJ OPINION, WHICH HE EXPECTED IN OCTOBER, AND THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24'S MISSION APPEARED, THE BETTER. FERRER HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24'S SPECIAL MISSION MIGHT BE PASSED DIRECTLY TO THE FOURTH COMMITTEE AT THE UPCOMING UNGA RATHER THAN RECEIVE FORMAL PRIOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE OF 24. FERRER ALSO FOUND IT STRANGE THAT LIBYA, WHICH HAD HERETOFORE ESPOUSED SAHARAN INDEPENDENCE, HAD ACTED AS CHANNEL FOR MOROCCAN PROPOSAL.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE 16 MOROCCAN PRISONERS, FERRER SAID THE GOVT HAD DECIDED TO TURN THEM OVER AND HAD SO INFORMED THE MOROCCANS, ONLY PENDING ARRANGEMENTS AS TO SITE AND HOUR, WHEN THE ASSAULT THAT RESULTED IN A DEAD SPANISH SOLDIER OCCURRED. THIS WAS NO WAY TO TREAT SPAIN'S EFFORT TO CALM THE WATERS.SPAIN NOW AWAITED THE MOROCCAN EXPLANATION WHICH THE KING HAD PROMISED THEIR AMBASSADOR IN RABAT (REFTEL). UNTIL A SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION WAS FORTHCOMING, NOTHING COULD BE DONE ABOUT THE PRISONERS. HE ADDED THAT BOTH THE MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN AMBASSADORS WERE COMING IN TO SEE HIM.

4. SO FAR AS THE RUMORS OF AN ALGERIAN/MOROCCAN ACCORD ON THE SAHARA WERE CONCERNED, FERRER REITERATED THE MFA'S COMPLETE SKEPTICISM. HE SAID NOTHING HAD HAPPENED EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF DIMINUTION OF HOSTILE PROPAGANDA AND CERTAINLY THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE OF POSITION. HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO NOTE THAT WHILE SPAIN AND ALGERIA DID NOT NECESSARILY SEE EYE TO EYE, THERE WERE COINCIDENCES OF VIEW. HE SAID ALGERIA HAD MAINTAINED A PRINCIPLED POSITION THROUGHOUT THIS AFFAIR OF THE SAHARA.

5. SPAIN'S FUNDAMENTAL GOAL, FERRER SAID, LAY IN CONCLUDING THE SAHARA QUESTION QUOTE WITH DIGNITY AND WITH NO MORE BLOODSHED UNQUOTE.
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